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Communications intended for publication in THE TIMES must be clearly and plainly written, and must in all cases be accompanied by the name and address of the writer. Rejected communications will not be returned, and any manuscript of unusual importance will be returned to the writer.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1899.

A Comic Opera War.

If John Philip Sousa should happen to take it into his musical head to write a comic opera with the campaign in Luzon as his theme, he need not go farther than Oils for a star comedian, or than Oils' reports for a libretto. We hope that he will not catch the notion, because the appearance on any stage of the epauletted grandmother who conducts extensive military operations from the throne of a vice royal palace, without knowing the first thing about the geography, much less the topography, of the country in which she is reigning, would place DeWitt's "Rich" in the shade. And John D. Long in a condition of drol and eternal ecstacy.

We need not dwell upon the unlimited possibilities in the way of comic effects and humorous mirth contained in this idea. They will occur to readers of newspapers as naturally as a harmless, necessary thrust between acts. Let us dismise that branch of the subject with the remark that they are truly great and howling to heaven for the chance of public expression; and, for illustration, turn to the latest chapter in the screaming farce strategy of the satrap of Manila.

There are two places on the island and of Luzon with names so much alike as to confuse their identity in the brain of one who, like Oils, is quite ignorant of conditions and localities outside the back yard of his executive mansion. One of these is called Bayambang and the other is known as Bayombon. Bayambang is in the province of Pangasinan, near Tarlac, a little north of where two real officers, MacArthur and Lawton by name, are operating with as little reference as possible to Denby's man, Friar Oils. Someone, probably one of these real things, advised the governor general that Aguinaldo was at Bayombon, which is in the mountains of Nueva Vizcaya, seventy-five miles away from their field of movement. Of course, Oils jumped to the conclusion that the Tagal leader was immediately in front of MacArthur and Lawton, and so he sent Whistler with a brigade around by sea to the Gulf of Lingayen, to march down and catch the rascal.

The result of the movement, reported in advance from Manila with much flourish of trumpets, is before us. Oils explains that he did not know the difference between Bayambang and Bayombon, and that, hence, his plan of capture naturally and excusably failed. Everything he does naturally, though by no means excusably, fails. He is a failure in every respect except in the peculiar service he is kept in Manila to perform. He will fail in that, too, when Congress learns the truth.

Sir George's Desperate Plight.

Our Ladysmith news today is serious and saddening. It is now evident that the fighting on the second and third of November was without useful results. We have demonstrated its probable purpose, which appears to have been to withdraw the enemy from Cosenso, and paralyze their power south and southeast of the camp, in order to give Brigadier General Wolfe-Murray a chance to come in touch on the railway line and supply the garrison with ammunition for the next general attack.

The fear is general that White, or at least of ammunition for these pieces, the only means he had for replying to the long-range bombardment of Joubert. The latter is reported as receiving, or about to receive, fresh siege pieces from Pretoria. Cannonading is now constant, and the investment is said to be complete. We do not hear anything of Wolfe-Murray's movements. He must have recognized the futility of an attempt to reach White's rear and abandoned it, awaiting re-enforcements. One troopship which touched at the Cape, is on the way to Durban with a thousand men. It should reach there on the thirteenth. Two or three more may join it within three or four days afterward. So it will be seen that it is a race of death between help and Joubert's siege guns. For Sir George and his devoted garrison.

Soberly counting the chances, it appears to us to be about nip and tuck whether Ladysmith will surrender, a desperate attempt to cut out be made, or substantial assistance arrive in time to raise the siege. There is a hint of encouragement in the information sent out by White, by carrier pigeon, that the Boer long-range anti is ad; but that is something likely to be remedied after a few days' experience, and it must also be assumed that with modern siege guns and trained artillerymen, Kruger must have furnished himself with at least one or two improved range finders. Properly equipped, one scientific officer in a day could set the sights of a number of pieces so that they would hit their targets approximately every time. And if Joubert

can give Ladysmith the pounding we fear he is administering at this moment, it is, of course, the question of days, or perhaps hours, when the position might become untenable.

Against this prospect, we have only the superhuman courage of the British troops and the skill of their commander to depend upon. Sir George Stewart White will hold out to the last possible moment, and it may be he will be able to until a force of eight or nine thousand men can be hurled at the enemy from Durban. The situation is alarming, but not yet quite hopeless, as far as one can see at this distance.

Christian Science.

The Christian Scientist has not yet been deported, and a story of his doings which comes from Chicago indicates that the long-suffering people of that city ought to be ready to undertake his suppression. A four-year-old child died of cancer and tuberculosis, from which it had suffered for three years without medical attention, the parents being Christian Scientists. The parents were called to account, and told the jury that they had "resorted to prayer."

The spectacle of that frail infant slowly dying of two of the most painful diseases which can attack the human frame, while its parents, refusing all medical aid, offered up prayers for its cure, would be absurd if it were not intensely pitiful. The little thing could probably not have been cured in any event, but its sufferings might at any rate have been alleviated by means known to science. Perhaps a physician would have been called in had one of the parents been subject to the disease which attacked the little one, for the person who, with unshaken faith that nothing is the matter with him, endures the agonies of death from cancer must have some of the stolidity of the aboriginal Indian, singing his death-song at the stake. The sturdy pioneers who settled this country regarded Indian tortures of women and children as signs that the aborigines were not civilized or Christian. It has remained for the modern American, two hundred and fifty years later, to assert that the tormenting of children is a function of advancing civilization and Christianity.

There should be no dodging of this question under a mistaken idea of the necessity of tolerance. A religion which menaces the public health and causes the painful death of babes needs the attention of the police. As has been pointed out before in these columns, people who do not believe that smallpox, scarlet fever, and diphtheria are diseases at all are liable to transmit the ailments to other people on occasion, and there is no way of guarding against their mischievous influence if they are not made amenable to the laws of public safety. Such persons have no more right to disregard the quarantine established by common consent in such cases, and send their children to school, to give the scarlet fever infection to other children, than they would have to sit at their windows and fire a shotgun into the school yard while the pupils were gathered there. They might not believe that the shotgun would hurt anybody; but it would, for all that; and the police would not receive their excuse.

The state of the case, briefly, is this: The Christian Scientist must be required to call a physician when members of his family are ill with any contagious disease, or seriously ill from any cause; he should be required to follow the instructions of the physician in the case of small children, and he should be made to conform to quarantine regulations. If a grown person prefers to endure the torments of scintilla rather than ask a physician to relieve him, that is his business, and if he gets any fun out of it he may, for all that the public will care about him. But children should not be subjected to treatment of this kind, and the law should be amended, if necessary, to cover such cases. Failing to comply with these common-sense rules, the offender should be promptly taken to jail. He can comfort himself with the reflection that he is not really in jail if he does not think so.

A Hero and a Critic.

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne has again placed himself in evidence, this time as a book reviewer. In the course of his languid observations he takes occasion to remark with disapproval a line underneath the frontpiece of a certain book for boys. The scene is that of a young soldier, sword in hand, attacking a lot of Afghans, while others lie dead in the vicinity. The caption—a quotation from the story told by the young man—is, "There was a bit of a scrimmage." This is what Mr. Le Gallienne, in his dainty way, has to say about it.

It is sheer vulgarity, a vulgarly dead to the life and vigor of the young. Of course, an Englishman is a good fellow, but the line shows him in a different light, and it is a little corner of a battlefield "a bit of a scrimmage."

This dreary young man with the chrysanthemum head of hair is not supposed to know much about battlefields, his specialties being Morris wall paper, and Nigeria on a clothes-line. It is, of course, likely that the youth pictured as fighting desperately to defend his dead comrade's body from a lot of bloodthirsty savages who wanted to mutilate it, would be quite as much alive to "the pity and terror of the situation" as the author of "The Queen of the Golden Girl" could possibly be; but evidently the latter does not think so. He is disgraced, apparently, with this "bit of a scrimmage." It is true that as a rule battlefields are not very clean places, and it would therefore be well for Mr. Le Gallienne to keep off, since he would certainly not be clean at the end of a fracas like that described. In fact, there might not be very much left of him, clean or otherwise; and what could be swept up in a dustpan would probably not be immaculate. It seems as if he might be willing to allow the hero of that "scrimmage" to tell about it in whatever words he happened to choose. If the young soldier was vulgar, might be well for a few hundred thousand young Englishmen and Americans to go in for vulgarity in a moderate way, even if it did shock Mr. Le Gallienne on one side of the Atlantic and Mr. Edward Bok on the other.

As for the phraseology, it is realistic. It is the kind of language the average young English officer uses when he is describing heroic actions in which he him-

self has borne a part. If his apt to be slangy, sometimes horsey, in his everyday talk, and he does not put on company manners in telling about his own good work. He has been brought up in an atmosphere of cricket and football, and he uses the speech thereof in describing a fight. A football scrimmage is not such a very bad simile for a battle. Mr. Le Gallienne may not know it—he probably never played any kind of outdoor game in his life—but a man can get himself rather badly hurt in football if luck's against him, and it takes a certain amount of courage to assume that risk. All the same, a manly boy likes to have something new, and then, and he is apt to admire the athlete quite as much as the jigger of words. If he has good red blood in his veins, and the making of a man in his brain, and soul, he would rather know a famous college athlete than Mr. Le Gallienne.

It is not at all desirable that this unassuming simplicity of style should be changed for anything more pretentious. There is no reason to suppose that there would be any advantage in teaching young soldiers to tell of what they have done in grandiloquent or even conventional language. If they are made of the right sort of stuff they will not tell of it at all, unless urged very strongly; and when they do see fit to talk, they will seem all the manner for their diffidence and lack of vocabulary. Mr. Le Gallienne would better keep opinions of the kind above quoted for five o'clock teas among people of his own sort. They are hardly fit for publication.

Mr. Hanna is disposed to make merry over the story of his probable retirement to the rheumatic shades of private life. Well may he laugh and giggle! The ability of the Ohio Democracy to throw away a sure thing by antagonizing the only respectable position held by him and his party is and ought to be vastly encouraging to the senator. He cannot help being convinced that as long as the main Democratic issue is furnished by Hoar, Most, Aguinaldo, and Atkinson, the country will swallow Hanna and Hannan in preference, without gulp or wink.

The war news from Kentucky begins to be exciting. The Brownites and the Hannanites are drawn up in martial array in the streets of mountainous Middleborough; and the Democrats have rallied to the defense of their liberties. A battle is expected momentarily. Probably the Republican forces are the stronger; for Governor Bradley has refused to send troops, which would hardly be the case if his side appeared likely to get the worst of the fight.

Even the gallant general at Ladysmith is not gifted with courage more desperate than that which imbues Sir Thomas Lipton. The latter announces his intention to challenge for the America's Cup in 1901. He feels like other brave British sportsmen that Britannia cannot be said to rule the waves, while that archaic bit of plate remains in the cupboard of Uncle Sam. So he will play his five again and try to "lift it." It is a heavy contract.

It is reported that, in a recent test of the Virginia coast, the new battleship Kentucky "behaved admirably." We think it proper to caution the Navy Department that, if the Kentucky is anything like her namesake, it would be advisable to see that she is arranged so that one end can get to fighting the other.

FOR THE DEWEY ARCH.

Col. John Jacob Astor Donates \$100,000 to Perpetuate It.

NEW YORK, Nov. 10.—Though the fact has not been formally announced, the report that Col. John Jacob Astor has given \$100,000 toward the perpetuation of the Dewey arch as a tribute to the Navy is not denied by those in a position to know the truth in the matter. Colonel Astor himself is out of town. The committee of the arch permits it to be inferred that the report is true. Colonel Astor's subscription of \$100,000 assures New Yorkers that the arch will be built entirely by local subscriptions. Other amounts already pledged are \$100,000, making a total of nearly \$200,000, and the subscribers have not begun work yet. Thus far this is the largest single contribution to the fund, though some of the individual amounts already pledged run into four and five figures.

The work of organizing the financial end of the enterprise is progressing rapidly. The committee has agreed to divide the work of collecting among the 100 subcommittees, each the representative of a trade or profession.

HAD ONLY \$1,000 BILLS.

A Big Note Presented to Pay for a \$10 Purchase.

CHICAGO, Nov. 10.—Mrs. George Bass, who assisted in a booth in the flower show yesterday, was handed a \$1,000 bill in payment for \$10 worth of books bought by a well-dressed woman. "It is the smallest bill I have," said the buyer, with the air of one who thought it was a matter of small concern, at the same time showing the note of like denomination to the cashier. Mrs. Bass took the bill to W. H. Atwater, who was acting as cashier for the booth, and who had twenty years experience as a bank teller. He pronounced the bill good and genuine, and the woman was Miss Ellis Goodale, of New York.

A Vulture as a Trick Bird.

To teach a big black vulture as much tricks as a poodle has been the diversion of an English collector of uncanny pets. This monster bird, which has a head like a lion, and a body like a dog, was trained to do a number of things, and it was a great success. The bird was named "The Queen of the Golden Girl."

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BANKS IN VENEZUELA.

Consul Plummer Makes a Report on Financial Institutions.

Consul Plummer writes to the State Department from Maracaibo relative to the banking institutions of Venezuela. The Campesino de Credito, he states, has a capital of \$100,000, and was organized in 1875 by Gen. Guzman Blanco, Provisional President of the Republic.

The Banco Comercio was established in 1883 by a stock company, with a capital of \$617,600. In 1884 it took over the business of the Bank of Caracas, and in 1896 was merged into the Bank of Venezuela.

The Bank of Venezuela was established in 1891 by a joint stock company, with a capital of \$1,540,000. It was organized after a vote of \$2,836,000, and reduced later to \$2,316,000.

It transacts all kinds of banking operations, advances money for the payment of Government expenses, and collects all national dues. It has established agencies in all the ports and principal towns of the Republic. The president of its board of directors is Martin H. Perez; secretary, Heriberto Castillo.

The Bank of Caracas was established by a joint stock company, promoted by Messrs. H. L. Boulton & Co., Mendoza & Co., Lesur, Rorer & Co., Ed and Ose, Basch, Lohr, and Co., and others. Its capital is \$1,128,000; address, 47 South Avenue. It transacts all kinds of banking business. The president is J. M. A. Matos manager, Luis H. Castillo.

The Bank of Maracaibo was founded in Maracaibo in 1853 by the Mutual Aid Society, in the form of a joint stock company, with a capital of \$300,000, and a reserve fund of \$150,000. Its capital is \$1,128,000; address, 47 South Avenue. It transacts all kinds of banking business. The president is J. M. A. Matos manager, Luis H. Castillo.

The Banco Monte de Piedad was established under the name "Monte de Piedad" in 1890. It was organized by Jose Martinez, with the object of loaning money on jewelry. The capital is \$1,128,000; address, 47 South Avenue. It transacts all kinds of banking business. The president is J. M. A. Matos manager, Luis H. Castillo.

The Banco Colonial Britanico was established in Caracas by the Colonial Bank of England in 1890. It was organized by Jose Martinez, with the object of loaning money on jewelry. The capital is \$1,128,000; address, 47 South Avenue. It transacts all kinds of banking business. The president is J. M. A. Matos manager, Luis H. Castillo.

The Banco Nacional was established by the national Congress in Caracas in May, 1881. Its capital is \$2,000,000. It was organized by Jose Martinez, with the object of loaning money on jewelry. The capital is \$1,128,000; address, 47 South Avenue. It transacts all kinds of banking business. The president is J. M. A. Matos manager, Luis H. Castillo.

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Three credit institutions have existed under the name of Banco de Caracas. The first was established in 1876, with a capital of \$100,000. It was organized by Jose Martinez, with the object of loaning money on jewelry. The capital is \$1,128,000; address, 47 South Avenue. It transacts all kinds of banking business. The president is J. M. A. Matos manager, Luis H. Castillo.

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THE WORLD'S SILK PRODUCT.

Consul Covert Makes a Report on the Output.

John C. Covert, United States Consul at Lyons, has made a report to the State Department regarding the world's output of raw silk in 1898. The information is derived from the statistics of the Silk Producers' Association of Lyons, which has just been published.

The report gives in detail the product of the various departments of France; and a general statement of production in Italy, Spain, Austria-Hungary, the Levant (comprised of Constantinople), the Ba Kan provinces, the island of Rhodes, Greece, the Caucasus, and the extreme Orient. Under this caption are included exportations from China, Japan, and the East Indies. The report is as follows:

"The quantity of silks put to hatch in France (seda means silkworms' eggs), or hatched in France, was 144,984 ounces. This was 13,954 ounces less than in 1897, and 49,510 ounces less than the average for the ten preceding years. This is a continuation of the decline in production which has marked the last ten years. In 1888, the total output was 184,484 ounces, and in 1898 it was 144,984 ounces. The average for the decade was 154,484 ounces. In spite of the fact that the Government gives the silkworm breeders a bounty of 5 cents a pound, the production is decreasing. The years 1897 and 1898 are the lowest of the decennial period. The production was diminished in these two years by heavy frosts."

The official figures show the total production of 1898 to have been 15,196,386 pounds, against 16,821,390 pounds for 1897. The world's production for 1898 is below the average for the past ten years—a decline of a little over 11 per cent as compared with 1897.

"The average production of fresh cocoons for an ounce of seed perceptibly declined in 1898, and was 41.5 pounds, while the average for 1897 was 45.5 pounds, and that for 1896, 52.5 pounds.

"The quantity of cocoons reserved for seeding in the departments of the Vosges, the Haute and Basse-Alpes, and Corsica, is estimated at 881,840 pounds.

The production of raw silk in France in 1898 was 1,212,550 pounds, only about one-half of that in 1897, and 1,212,550 pounds less than the average for the ten preceding years. The average product of an ounce of seed for 1898 was 41.5 pounds, and for 1897, 45.5 pounds, and for 1896, 52.5 pounds.

"The production of raw silk aggregated 6,596,163 pounds, 167,500 pounds in excess of 1897, and 557,000 pounds in excess of the average of the ten preceding years. The world's production for the year was 24,382,555 pounds, as follows:

Spain and Austria.....714,290 pounds.
 France.....1,212,550 pounds; Italy, 8,595,161 pounds; Asia, 3,250,603 pounds; extreme Orient (exportations), 22,799,971 pounds."

ACCIDENTS TO STEAMBOATS.

The Bombardment of Puerto Cabello Would Not Be Allowed.

NEW YORK, Nov. 10.—A cable report received here from Caracas said that a Government warship was bombarding Puerto Cabello for the purpose of compelling the surrender of Col. Antonio Paredes. Such an act would not be permitted by Commander Hemphill, of the United States cruiser Detroit, which is at that port, on account of the American and American interests in that place.

Consul General Antonio E. Delfino said that the bombardment was being directed against the fort leading to the port, and not the city. He said that the city was a small island and commands the entrance of the port, is held by Colonel Paredes, who refuses to surrender to General Castro.

Senator Delfino received from the government a cable dispatch announcing the reopening to foreign shipping of the ports of Corro